



**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers**

Walla Walla District
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News Release

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Learn about birds, rocks and history at speaker series

Umatilla, Ore., – Got the winter blues and want to get out? Spend an interesting evening or afternoon at the McNary Dam and learn about science and history.

The "Natural Wonders of the Mid-Columbia Speaker Series" will be held January - April and is co-sponsored by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Blue Mountain Community College.

The presentations are free and will be held at the McNary Dam Theater, located next to the power house, on the Oregon side of the river near Umatilla. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. For information or to register, call (541) 567-1800.

The following is a schedule of the series:

Jan. 27, 7 p.m., Come Fly with the Raptors. *Steve Lewis, wildlife biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.* From an expert with a passion for the outdoors and preservation of all wildlife, learn about different species, geographic distribution and migration patterns of birds of prey. The focus will be on bald eagles, goshawks and raptor use of the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge.

Feb. 3, 7 p.m., Ancient Metals and Meteorites. *Dr. Burt Johnson, senior staff scientist,, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.* Learn from a physical chemist how metal meteorites, native and archeological metals have lasted for millennia and how the ancients mined, utilized and classified metals. See specimens from the last Ice Age and hear music made on ancient metals.

Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Lewis & Clark on the Upper Columbia. *Don Eppenbach, M.S. degree in 19th century European history.* Hear from a local historian about the events that occurred during the adventurer's time in Morrow and Umatilla counties, with an introduction to Corps of Discovery and their mission.

Feb. 16, 7 p.m., Wildflowers of the Stabilized Columbia Basin Dunes. *Jean Zach, wildflower photographer and amateur botanist.* View lands that are sand and original shrub-steppe vegetation through the artist's camera lens. Meet wildflowers, shrubs, and bunch grasses close-up.

Feb 17, 7 p.m., Images of Science – Cartoons to Molecules. *Dr. Dan Baer, staff scientist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.* Enjoy a presentation using cartoons about science. Did you lose that molecule? Why do atoms in the wrong place cause things to fall apart? Explore nanofabrication (how to make very small things that might save the world).

Feb. 23, 1 p.m., Why Dragonflies are cool: the Natural History of Some Very Interesting Insects. *Michelle Miller, zoology instructor, Blue Mountain Community College.* A brief introduction to the evolution and ecology of a few extraordinary creatures including the dragonfly and the burying and dung beetle.

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Feb. 24, 7 p.m., Shorebirds: Lives in Passage. *Mike Denny, biologist, Audubon Society Chapter Director.* Denny began birding at age eight in Zambia, Africa and has made birding his way of life. He has studied bird distribution and migration strategies throughout the Northwest, illustrated a bird book and written numerous articles. His talk will focus on such mysteries as why large flocks never collide and how they survive predation.

Mar. 2, 7 p.m., Rare Plants of the Shrub-Steppe. *Sally Simmons, botanist and environmental scientist, Washington State University.* What exactly is rarity? Why do some populations flourish in one area and not in another? Come and learn about the rare and common native plants of the shrub-steppe.

Mar. 9, 7 p.m., The Night Sky: Understanding our Place in the Universe. *Roy Gephart, geohydrologist, and amateur astronomer, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.* Join a grand tour of the universe from the moon out to the stars. Hear a vivid description of our place in the Milky Way galaxy, the life and death of stars, and why the moon looks the way it does.

Mar. 15, 7 p.m., A Place for Nature to Breathe: Landscaping for the Birds and Bees. *Diane Aekernan, naturalist and gardener.* Learn how to create a bug, bird, and butterfly friendly habitat in your backyard using fruit producing trees and drought-tolerant perennials.

Mar. 16, 7 p.m., Earthquakes and Lava Flows: Introduction to the Geology of the Columbia Basin. *Dr. Steve Reidel, geologist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.* Trace the geologic evolution of the Pacific Northwest from one billion years ago to the beginning of the Ice Age. Learn how Siberia and Australia were once part of this continent, about continental collision and drift and how volcanic eruptions and floods influenced and contributed to the Columbia River system.

Mar. 22, 1 p.m., Wetland Restoration – Science or Art? *David Linehan, biologist and refuge manager, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.* From local examples at Cold Springs and Toppenish, learn about efforts to restore and preserve our precious wetlands.

Mar. 23, 7 p.m., Lichens and Mosses of the Hanford Reservation. *Dr. Steve Link, botanist, Washington State University faculty.* See and learn about lichens and mosses found on the soils at the Hanford Reservation and their role in the shrub-steppe ecosystem. Three undescribed species will be presented and methods of lawn elimination and backyard restoration using native plants will be discussed.

Mar. 30, 7 p.m., Cataclysmic Ice Age Floods in the Mid-Columbia Basin. *Bruce Bjornstad, senior research scientist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.* Cataclysmic ice-age floods repeatedly inundated Eastern Washington including the McNary Dam area during the Pleistocene Epoch (13,000 years to one million years ago). Trace the path of the floods from their source all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

Apr. 6, 7 p.m., Wildflowers of the Bar-M-Ranch. *Jerry Baker, ranch owner and botanist.* See a slide show of Eastern Oregon wildflowers found near Pendleton. Highlights will be beautiful members of the orchid and sunflower families.

Apr. 13, 7 p.m., Images of Nature – Wildlife and Scenics. *John L. Hindernan, photographer.* Come view the Northwest from Alaska to Irrigon through the lens of an internationally published photographer. A stunning slide presentation of animals of the Northwest and the beautiful land that we share with them.

Apr. 20, 7 p.m., Mount Rainier, Snowdonia, and the Cascades. *Larry Ross, hiker, photographer and wilderness enthusiast.* "How to Enjoy Hiking" will include slides of treks from Deception Pass in the Juan de Fuca Straits in Washington to the further reaches of Wales and Scotland and lots of areas in between.

Apr. 27, 7 p.m., bats: Sentinels of the Night. *Steve Lewis, wildlife biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.* Come and learn about this essential and most misunderstood of mammals. Talk and slideshow will focus on the biology, speciation, special adaptations, habitat use, and feeding habits of the much-maligned bat.